



Aethiopica 3 (2000)

International Journal of Ethiopian and
Eritrean Studies

GIDEON GOLDENBERG

Personalia

In memoriam Shlomo Raz (1936–1999)

Aethiopica 3 (2000), 190–191

ISSN: 1430–1938

Published by

Universität Hamburg

Asien Afrika Institut, Abteilung Afrikanistik und Äthiopistik

Hiob Ludolf Zentrum für Äthiopistik

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In memoriam Shlomo Raz (1936–1999)

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Shlomo Raz, Professor of Semitic Linguistics at Tel-Aviv University, passed away on the 11th of April, 1999, shortly after his 63rd birthday. His special field of study was Ethiopian languages, in particular Tigre and Amharic. His other expertise was in Arabic dialects and in phonetics in general.

Shlomo Raz was born on the 18th of March 1936 in Tiberias; the family then moved to Yavne'el, in the Lower Galilee, then to Rehovot, Tel-Aviv and Netanya. Shlomo studied Linguistics and Semitic languages at the Hebrew University of Jerusalem, mainly with Prof. H. J. Polotsky, and made there his B.A. in 1968. At the School of Oriental and African Studies of the University of London Shlomo Raz accomplished in 1974 his doctoral dissertation on Tigre Grammar and Texts under the supervision of Professor Edward Ullendorff, based on original field-work in Eritrea, and since then he was teaching at Tel-Aviv University until his tragic untimely death. The most important contribution of Professor Shlomo Raz to the field of Ethiopian linguistics was undoubtedly in the study of the Tigre language, which he has rebuilt on a new basis. Besides his *Tigre Grammar and Texts*, which was published in 1983 by Undena as No. 4 in the series Afroasiatic Dialects, and the chapter on Tigre in the Routledge volume of *Semitic Languages*, ed. HETZRON, 1997, he wrote several articles on Tigre in the general context of Ethiopian languages, and lately he was conducting in Eritrea a thorough research on the language of the Beni Amer with its complexities. He also studied areal features in Ethiopian languages, and wrote especially about converbial forms and their syntactical equivalents, and compound tense-forms where such forms are involved (*Areal Features as a Criterion in Elucidating the Term 'Ethiopian Semitic'*, in *African Languages and Cultures* 2.1, 1989; *The Definite Future*, in *Semitic Studies* in honor of Wolf Leslau,

1991; *Archaic and Innovative Tense-Forms in Gurage*, in *Semitic and Cushitic Studies*, 1994).

Important studies of Professor Raz of the languages of Arabian inscriptions and of South-Arabian languages have unfortunately remained unpublished. Since the beginning of his linguistic research activities, Shlomo Raz was especially interested in phonetics. His most important paper when still a student was on Visible Speech. In his research on Tigre, he devoted a special article to the status of vowel quantity (Proceedings of the 6th International Conference of Ethiopian Studies, 1986), and during the last two decades he has been conducting an extensive investigation into the phonetics and phonological structure of Palestinian and Syrian Arabic dialects; the preparation of a comprehensive book on this subject was cut unexpectedly by his sickness of which he died.

Shlomo Raz has been strongly associated with the Department of Semitic Linguistics of Tel-Aviv University since it was founded, he taught in that Department many subjects and had an important role in its organization, he was head of the Department of Hebrew and Semitic Languages, was also active in editing the volume of *Semitic and Cushitic Studies*, 1994, and *the Israel Oriental Studies*, and held various offices in the Faculty of Humanities at Tel-Aviv. Professor Raz was Visiting Scholar at the School of Oriental and African Studies of the University of London in 1980/81 and 1993, and at the University of California in Los Angeles in 1985; and a fellow of the Institute for Advanced Studies in Jerusalem in 1990/91.

The untimely death of Professor Raz is a great misfortune to Semitic and Ethiopian studies; the special human nature of Shlomo made his death a most painful personal loss to those who knew him.

In memoriam Charles Fraser Beckingham (1914–1998)

ARTHUR K. IRVINE

On 18 February 1999 a meeting was held at the School of Oriental and African Studies to commemorate the life of Professor Charles Beckingham, who had occupied the Chair of Islamic Studies at the college from 1965 till